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Message Text

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45
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07

FMC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 SAL-01 CG-00 OFA-01 DLOS-04

AID-05 /037 W
---------- 127908
R 130630Z MAR 76
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4643

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FOLLOWING REPEAT CALCUTTA 0644 SENT ACTION NEW DELHI
INFO DACCA 12 MAR 76.

QUOTE:

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CALCUTTA 0644

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ECRE, PFOR, IN, BG
SUBJ: FARAKKA BARRAGE

1. DURING LONG DISCUSSION WITH ENGINEER WHO WORKS FOR CUYCUTTA PORT TRUST, WE PICKED UP SOME FURTHER INFORMATION ON EFFECTS OF FARAKKA BARRAGE WHICH WE ARE REPORTING BECAUSE OF SUBJECT'S CURRENT INTEREST.

2. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, SILTATION PROBLEM IN HOOGHLY HAD BECOME WORSE AS TIDAL APEX (I.E., FARTHEAST POINT TO WHICH TIDE ADVANCES) MOVED UP THE RIVER. WATER SUPPLY TO HOOGHLY WAS REDUCED NOT ONLY BY CHANGED COURSE OF GANGES, BUT ALSO BY CONSTRUCTION OF DAMS ON UPPER REACHES OF OTHER TRIBUTARIES OF HOOGHLY. BEFORE FARAKKA WENT INTO OPERATION, TIDAL APEX REACHED AS FAR AS NABADWIP, SOME 60 MILES NORTH OF CALCUTTA. RESULT WAS THAT SILT WAS PUSHED FURTHER AND FURTHER UP THE RIVER. ATTEMPTS AT DREDGING AND OTHER FORMS
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OF RIVER "TRAINING" WERE NOT SUCCESSFUL; THERE WAS JUST NOT

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ENOUGH WATER AND IT WAS NOT MOVING FAST ENOUGH TO FLUSH
OUT RIVER.

3. AFTER MANY STUDIES, DECISION WAS MADE IN MID-1950'S
THAT BARRAGE WAS NECESSARY. CONSTRUCTION BEGAN IN 1963-64
AND WAS COMPLETED IN 1968, BUT BARRAGE DID NOT GO INTO OPERATION
UNTIL 1975 BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, OF POLITICAL
PROBLEMS WITH PAKISTAN AND THEN WITH BANGLADESH. ALONG WITH
DAM, RIVER TRAINING WORKS HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN TO STRAIGHTEN
HOOGHLY AND HOLD IT WITHIN NARROWER BANKS, THEREBY INCREASING
WATER VELOCITY AND ENABLING INCREASED WATER SUPPLY TO HAVE
FULL EFFECT.

4. SOURCE SAID THAT POSITIVE RESULTS FROM FARAKKA OPERATION
HAVE ALREADY BEEN SEEN IN PORT AREA AND ALONG RIVER. DEPTH OF
CHANNEL HAS INCREASED BY ABOUT THREE FEET AT CALCUTTA AND
TIDAL APEX HAS MOVED 15 MILES SOUTH. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT
CHANNEL AT CALCUTTA MIGHT BECOME TEMPORARILY SHALLOWER AGAIN
AS SILT FROM UP-RIVER IS PUSHED DOWNSTREAM, BUT PORT TRUST
EXPECTS THAT IMPROVEMENTS WILL HAVE STABILIZED BY 1982-83.
AUTHORITIES REALIZE CALCUTTA WILL NEVER BE SUITABLE FOR LARGE
BULK CARRIERS, BUT HOPE TO BBE ABLE TO HANDLE MEDIUM DRAFT
VESSELS OF 25 TO 40 FEET. AT CALCUTTA ITSELF THEY HOPE TO
DEEPEN CHANNEL TO 30 FEET DURING THE DRY SEASON--A DEPTH
THAT COULD ACCOMODATE SHIPS OF 26-27 FOOT DRAFT. ANCILLIARY
BENEFITS FROM FARAKKA BARRAGE INCLUDE DECREASED SALINITY OF
HOOGHLY AND CONCOMITANT IMPROVEMENT OF CALCUTTA WATER SUPPLY
AND POSSIBILITY OF INLAND NAVIGATION VIA HOOGHLY AND
GANGES. PROVISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR LOCKS WHICH WOULD
MAKE THE FARAKKA FEEDER CANAL NAVIGABLE TO BOATS TRAVELING
BETWEEN THE GANGES AND THE HOOGHLY.

5. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ABOUT BANGLADESH COMPLAINTS,
SOURCE SAID THAT IN FACT MAIN PROBLEM WITH PADMA (NAME OF
GANGES IN BANGLADESH) WAS FLOODING. THE BARRAGE SHOULD HELP
REDUCE THIS. HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT JOINT INDO-BANGLADESH
SURVEY COMMITTEE WHICH STUDIED IMPACT OF BARRAGE OPERATION
IN 1975 REPORTED THAT DIVERSION OF WATER BY BARRAGE WAS NOT
CAUSING ANY DETERIORATION OF PADMA.

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6. STATESMAN MARCH 12 SAYS CALCUTTA PORT TRUST, IN REPORT
TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, HAS ASKED THAT SUPPLY OF WATER FROM
FARAKKA BE MAINTAINED DURING THREE LEAN MONTHS BEGINNING
MARCH 15 IN ORDER
TO "MAINTAIN THE 'REMARKABLE IMPROVEMENTS'
ALREADY ACHIEVED." REPORT SAID TO ARGUE THAT 8 PERCENT OF
RIVER'S DETERIORATION TAKES PLACE IN LEAN MONTHS, AND THAT IF
WATER SUPPLY NOT CONTINUED, ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE WATER

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FROM FARAKKA STARTED FLOWING ON OCTOBER 1, 1975, WOULD "COMPLETELY NEGATED." ARTICLE SAYS THAT PORT AUTHORITY CLAIMS CHANNEL OF RIVER HAS STABILIZED FOR FIRST TIME IN HISTORY AND NO LONGER DRIFTS FROM SIDE TO SIDE. IN ADDITION SILT FROM UPSTREAM IS REPORTEDLY NOT BEING DEPOSITED BECAUSE OF INCREASED FLOW OF WATER AND DREDGING OPERATIONS ABOUT 8 MILES FROM CALCUTTA. AS A RESULT, HEAVY DREDGING BELOW THE CITY HAS NOT BEEN NECESSARY. ACCORDING TO STATESMAN, REPORT DOES NOT CLAIM ANY INCREASE IN DEPTH OF RIVER, BUT ARGUES THAT OTHER IMPROVEMENTS ARE SIGNIFICANT.

7. ARTICLE STATES THAT PORT EXPERTS DO NOT THINK FARAKKA WILL HAVE ANY NEGATIVE AFFECT ON BANGLADESH. THEY REPORTEDLY ARGUE THAT WATER FROM BRAHMAPUTRA IS SUFFICIENT TO REGENERATE PADMA.
KORN

UNQUOTE.
SCHNEIDER

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Draft Date: 13 MAR 1976
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